

Fallen Giants: A History of Himalayan Mountaineering from the Age of Empire to the Age of Extremes

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The authors have transformed the catalog-of-climbs, accounts-of-accidents approach of Himalayan mountaineering history into one that captures history and change—from sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century reports, through the early amateur climbers such as Mallory and Irvine to today's highly publicized ascents. Heroism, death, and drama abound, but so does poli-ticking, manipulation by host countries, and the horrific degradation of environment. Nonetheless, the unrivaled grandeur of the peaks and the outsize egos of their conquerors shine through. The author's thoroughness and range make this hefty volume nearly encyclopedic in scope; the details on the "how" of climbing, the no-margin-for-error experience, and the bonus of Vittorio Sella's unmatched photographs make for a great book.

PETER SKINNER (January 9, 2009)

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